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27 January 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, RQM/OIS

SUBJECT : Semi-Annual Progress Report on the War Documentation Project (WDP)

1. This report intends to review the work done during the period July-December 1955 and to acquaint the requesting offices with the type of information which can be obtained in answer to their requests.

2. A conference with most of these requesting offices took place in [] office on 30 June 1955; subsequent meetings took place on target information on 11 August and on information pertaining to Polish underground and Communist activities at the beginning of November. In addition, preliminary talks were conducted on the requirement pertaining to military histories in June and July 1955.

3. During the initial period of research, emphasis was given to the requirement on histories of Soviet military units during World War II. Research was concentrated on finding appropriate units which participated in the defense of Leningrad. Approximately 1,500 documents of units subordinate to the German Army Group North were scanned since this army group conducted the drive on Leningrad. These documents were primarily German Army Corps and Division intelligence reports, although Army Group and Army documents as well as German High Command documents (OKH and OKW) contained some valuable data.

Of these documents, about 200 were selected for further exploitation. Estimating an average of 200 pages per document, information was extracted from about 40,000 pages. Extremely informative material such as captured Soviet diaries and interrogation reports were translated. A preliminary index was made for those Soviet units which promised to be suitable for the research project.

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It was determined to compile detailed information of the 929th Infantry Regiment of the 254th Infantry Division covering a period of August 1941 to September 1943. The result of this study entitled History of the 929th Infantry Division is appended as Supplement I.

It is now intended to compile the history of an artillery unit which participated in the defense of Leningrad. The continued research for military units would be aided most effectively if the requesting office were to point out any additional campaigns on which to concentrate.

4. No information has yet been found for biographical studies of personalities now in public life in Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. This requirement will be kept in mind but it is doubtful whether any information will be obtained.

5. The examination of material pertaining to Polish underground and Communist activities in Poland during World War II has been based up to now on the available McBee card catalog. The material thus scanned amounted to roughly 150 folders or approximately 30,000 pages. Of these folders, only 31 contained information which appeared to be more or less in line with the requirement. There are 12 folders which included material on Poland exclusively, but most information does not appear pertinent to the requirement. A short description of the pertinent documents contained in these 31 folders is given in Supplement II.

6. In answer to the requested spot survey of captured documents with reference to French nationals who collaborated with the Germans during World War II, approximately 125 folders of German high-level commands in occupied France, were examined; 12 of them were selected for thorough exploitation.

It was established that, while a great quantity of information on French nationals who worked with the Germans during World War II is available, it usually cannot be ascertained to what degree these people were real collaborators; they may have been just minor officials carrying out their routine duties, or private citizens looking for some special considerations.

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Also scanned was the document (Military Commander of France, 85142) which deals exclusively with Laval and personalities close to him; it comprises agents' reports regarding his reliability and behind-the-scenes activities, as well as accompanying official correspondence. Another document (Poland, 75026/6) deals with the so-called French Legion, commanded by Colonel Labonne, which fought with the German Army in Poland and the USSR. Document No OKW/558 mentions a certain Dubois, a French prisoner-of-war in Germany who in 1941 agitated among his fellow prisoners for collaboration with Germany and who apparently was the spokesman for the "Franzisten," probably a French collaborationist group. This OKW document also contains a personal history of French Brig Gen Henri Vernillat, who wanted to collaborate with the Germans.

Samples of the type of information which can be obtained are given as Supplement III. This supplement consists of four parts:

- a. An interrogation report of a French civilian who turned over to the authorities a British flyer whose aircraft had crashed;
 - b. A letter written by a French official expressing his desire for continued collaboration with the Germans;
 - c. A list of "defeatists" imprisoned by French authorities prior to the German occupation, whom the Germans wanted to be released;
 - d. An index of French officers on whom personal data and German character evaluations are available.
7. Meetings with the requesting office concerned with personality data on Soviet identities with indication of possible vulnerability took place in June and July. Since it was very difficult for the requesting office to formulate any guidance which could facilitate a research project of this extent, the requesting office agreed to the abandonment of this requirement. FDD offered to undertake a more limited project, i.e., if such personalities would be wanted for a definite and smaller region.

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8. In answer to the request on target information, a survey of captured documents dealing with industrial information was made. The survey involved approximately 110 documents, 15 of which were selected for thorough examination. It appears that most of this kind of target information can be obtained from documents containing reports from economic exploitation units attached to the German Armed Forces.

A total of nine sketches of metallurgical and petroleum installations in the USSR were selected from these documents for reproduction. They are appended as Supplement IV in the following order:

- a. Stalin Metallurgical Combine in Magnitogorsk;
- b. Novotagilsk Metallurgical Plant in Nizhniy Tagil;
- c. Serov Metallurgical Plant (Nadezhdinsk), Ural;
- d. Bakalstroy Metallurgical Plant in Chelyabinsk
(2 sketches);
- e. Stalin Kuznetskiy Metallurgical Combine in Stalinsk;
- f. Stalin Oil Refinery in Batumi (2 sketches);
- g. Oil Storage Installation at Afipskaya Railroad Station.

9. Very little information has been found on escape and evasion, German estimates of US and British espionage and sabotage techniques and equipment, and German and Russian agent equipment. Also data on Soviet and Satellite intelligence services have been very scarce and only very sporadic information has been obtained.

10. In answer to the requirement pertaining to Smolensk Communist Party files (J-190), the pertinent documents were selected from the collection and reproduced. The photostats were received only in December 1955. Subsequently, the photostats have been arranged into two volumes accompanied by commentaries, translation, and summaries. Work on Volume I, the more complex and varied of the two sets of material, has been substantially completed. The entire project will be completed by 15 February 1956.

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11. It is hoped that the requesting office will comment on the past effort in order to ensure maximum usefulness of the planned projects.

J. J. BAGNALL
Chief, Foreign Documents Division

Enclosures: 4 (w/orig only)

1. Supplement I. History of the 929th Infantry Division
2. Supplement II. Polish Underground Activities During World War II
3. Supplement III. French Collaborators
4. Supplement IV. Target Information

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